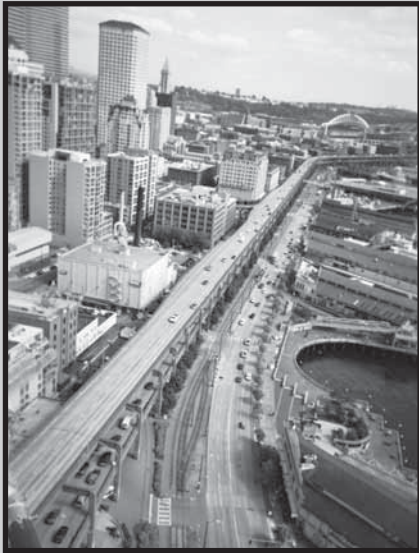


The Alaskan Way Viaduct & Seawall Replacement Project

04.06



For More Information:

Visit the Web site at:

[www.wsdot.wa.gov/
projects/viaduct](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/viaduct)

Call the hotline:

206-269-4421

Send an e-mail to:

viaduct@wsdot.wa.gov

Send a letter to:

Alaskan Way Viaduct and
Seawall Replacement Project
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Department of Transportation
999 Third Avenue, Suite 2424
Seattle, WA 98104

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Will Rising Sea Levels Threaten the Seawall?

By now, it's no secret that the impacts of climate change are real. In fact, a recent report from the University of Washington suggested that climate change may cause sea levels in the Puget Sound to rise by as much as 2.8 feet over the next 75 years. The City of Seattle and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) take this concern very seriously. Since we began looking at replacing the seawall in 2001, all of our designs are based on the assumption that in the future, the sea level in the Puget Sound will be higher than it is today.

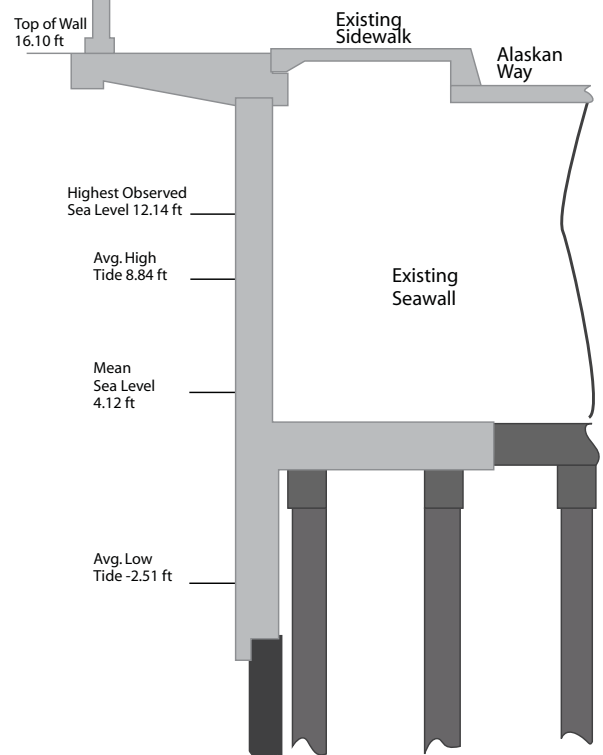
We're Prepared

After studying technical data, project engineers concluded that there is a 50% chance that sea levels will rise .9 to 1.4 feet over the next 75-100 years and only a 10% chance that they will rise 1.6 to 2.3 feet. Scientists at the University of Washington Climate Impacts Group also studied the seawall and projected a rise of 1.0 to 2.8 feet in the same time period. With both estimates, we're prepared--there will be room between the highest sea level estimate and the top of the seawall. It does not appear to be necessary to build a higher seawall, but we continue to collect and evaluate new information as it arises.

Would a curved seawall reduce sea levels?

No, curves would have almost no effect on whether a rising

The below drawing shows the existing sea level elevations in relation to the seawall. If the sea level rises, there is still room between the sea level and top of the seawall.



**All elevations are given in relation to the 1988 North American Vertical Datum (NAVD88)*

sea level would go over the wall's edge. This is because the 'pockets' created by a curved design make a minimal impact on sea levels in the entire Puget Sound.

Why replace the seawall?

Even if rising sea levels are not a concern for the seawall, the current structure is damaged and deteriorating. It was built in the 1930's and the internal timber is slowly being eaten away by tiny marine creatures called gribbles and shipworms. Both the seawall and viaduct are at risk of failure in another major earthquake. With a 1-in-20 chance that an earthquake will strike within the next 10 years, it is imperative to act quickly.

What's the plan for replacing the viaduct?

Like the seawall, the Alaskan Way Viaduct is also severely damaged and needs to be replaced. In December 2004, the lead agencies announced the tunnel as the preferred alternative to replace the viaduct. The tunnel is a 2-for-1 solution because the new seawall will serve as the west wall of the tunnel. An elevated structure is also being considered as an alternative. The seawall would be replaced as part of this alternative. Regardless of the alternative chosen, the seawall will be replaced at the same time as the viaduct in order to minimize construction disruptions.



Views of the Seawall from Elliott Bay.

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